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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
22 March 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 4:00 P.M. EST)

1. Antigovernment activity gained new militancy today as various "struggle groups" in I Corps preempted the government radio stations. There appears to have been no attempt by local authorities to intervene.
2. University students in Hue seized the Hue radio station this morning, justifying their action by the argument that "moderation is no longer effective." For several hours, until reception deteriorated, there were repeated broadcasts attacking the legality of the present regime in Saigon, denouncing Chief of State Thieu, Premier Ky, and Deputy Premier Co, and calling for implementation of the four-point program of the Buddhist hierarchy.
3. In Da Nang, a regular radio announcer broadcast a communique in the name of the "Popular Force Struggling for Revolution"--identified as the new appellation of the previous "civil and military struggle group." The communique announced that the group was formally organizing itself to speak for the local populace and military. The statement also said that the "Popular Force" was "taking the Vietnamese Information Service as its headquarters, and the radio station, until the struggle is successful."
4. There are other indications that antigovernment groups are gearing up for a major campaign against the Saigon government. The chief of Quang Ngai Province reportedly stated yesterday that the people in central Vietnam would not accept the military's "high-handed manner of dismissing General Thi" and that agitation would continue until the present government

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is brought down.

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5. In Saigon, there are continuing reports of efforts by a "struggle force," including at least some Buddhist monks, to organize student demonstrations. Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau reportedly personally dispersed an attempted demonstration today by pupils of one Buddhist-run school.

6. It is still possible that this antigovernment activity will fail to gain momentum and die out. It seems more likely, however, that Premier Ky will soon be forced either to make some concessions, or to adopt stronger measures to put an end to protest activity. Should he follow the latter course, he risks some danger that authorities in I Corps may defy his orders or that repressive measures may further inflame emotions and play into opposition hands.

7. Ky, meanwhile, in an effort to prevent a hardening Buddhist attitude, has issued a public denial that his statements at Da Lat this weekend were aimed at the Buddhist leadership or that he considers Buddhist wishes "illogical and unpatriotic." Ky also praised Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau as a respected national leader and anti-Communist, an indication of his apparent hope that Chau can be kept on a course of moderation even if Tri Quang attempts to organize an all-out opposition movement.

8. Meanwhile, there has been no indication that General Thi has responded to orders reportedly sent him yesterday to return to Saigon at once because of the return of Tri Quang to I Corps. Thi had earlier told a group of reporters that the situation in central Vietnam would worsen if he left.

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